

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OPR-02 OMB-01 ACDA-05 SY-05 A-01

OC-05 CCO-00 IO-10 SCCT-01 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00

COME-00 /100 W

----- 020430

O P 071451Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6546

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

FOFIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12479

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: UNCERTAIN PEACE HOLDS IN LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 12391

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH CEASEFIRE INFRACTIONS HAVE NOT STOPPED, THE GENERAL CALM ACHIEVED BEFORE THE WEEKEND STILL PREVAILS. RELIGIOUS LEADERS OCT 4 CALLED FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND A SPIRIT OF "DIALOGUE." THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" WILL RECONVENE OCT 9. END SUMMARY.

2. RELATIVE CALM HAS PREVAILED IN BEIRUT OVER THE WEEKEND AND THROUGH 1200 HOURS (LOCAL) OCT 7, NO DOUBT HELPED BY THE JID-FITR HOLIDAY. SPORADIC VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASEFIRE HAVE OCCURRED, HOWEVER, AND THE HARD-CORE TROUBLE SPOTS OF CHIYAH (MOSTLY SHIA MOSLEM) AND AIN EL'RUMANEH (CHRISTIAN) CLASHED DURING NIGHT OF OCT 6-7. THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN ROOTING OUT ALL SNIPERS OR REMOVING ALL BARRICADES OF PRIVATE MILITIAS. ALSO, TENSION IS STILL HIGH IN THE ZGHORTA AREA AND ELSEWHERE IN NORTH LEBANON, WHERE SOME KIDNAPPINGS AND DYNAMITINGS ARE REPORTED.

3. BECAUSE OF THE IID AL-FITR HOLIDAY, AS WELL AS CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY, MANY BUSINESSES AND ALL BANKS ARE CLOSED TODAY, OCT 7. BUSINESS AND LABOR LEADERS PLAN TO MEET TOMORROW TO CONSIDER PROBLEM OF OPERATING UNDER PRESENT SECURITY CONDITIONS; BANKS PLAN TO OPEN, AND WE EXPECT MANY BUSINESSES WILL ALSO. AIRPORT FUEL STOCKS ARE NEARING NORMAL LEVELS, AND FUEL LOADING RESTRICTIONS AT AIRPORT MAY BE REMOVED SHORTLY. TERRORIST INCIDENT SATURDAY APPEARS NOT TO HAVE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED AIRPORT PASSENGER TRAFFIC, WHICH REMAINS AT ABOUT 50-70 PERCENT OF LEVEL NORMALLY EXPECTED FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR. CONTRARY TO ISRAELI RADIO REPORTS, THERE HAVE BEEN NO CASES OF TYPHUS IN BEIRUT. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN CASES OF TYPHOID AND OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, THE NUMBER HAS NOT BEEN ABNORMALLY HIGH (SEE SEPTTEL).

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4. RESHUFFLES OF COMMAND POSITIONS IN THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF) HAVE TAKEN PLACE. MOST NOTEWORTHY OF THOSE CONFIRMED SO FAR IS THE REPLACEMENT OF COL HISHAM QURAYTIM BY ARMY COL MOHAMED SAMI TABBARA AS HEAD OF BEIRUT POLICE. BOTH MEN ARE SUNNI MOSLEMS. DISSATISFACTION OF ISF PERFORMANCE BY INTMIN CAMILLE CHAMOUN IS BELIEVED TO LIE BEHIND THESE MOVES, TOGETHER WITH THE

ARMY'S WISH TO ASSERT INFLUENCE OVER ISF IN BEIRUT WHERE
ARMY TROOPS ARE NOW INVOLVED.

5. AN IMPORTANT MEETING OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS TOOK PLACE
OCT 4. IT BROUGHT TOGETHER THE MARONITE PATRIARCH, OTHER
CHRISTIAN ECCLESIASTICAL LEADERS, THE SUNNI MUFTI, SHIITE
IMAM MUSA SADR, AND THE DRUZE SHEIKH AQL MOHAMED ABU
SHAQRA. THEY MET IN THE MORNING AT BKERKE, THE SEAT OF
THE MARONITE PATRIARCH, THEN MOVED IN THE AFTERNOON TO THE
MOSLEM DAR EL-FATWA. THEY ISSUED A STATEMENT REJECTING
THE IDEA OF PARTITIONING LEBANON, CONDEMNING COMMUNAL
VIOLENCE, AND CALLING FOR A SPIRIT OF "DIALOGUS." THIS IS
VIEWED AS SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT BY THESE INFLUENTIAL VOICES
FOR THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE," WHICH WILL MEET
AGAIN OCT 9 AFTER A HOLIDAY RECESS OF NEARLY A WEEK.

6. THE PROBLEM OF SHIITE REPRESENTATION ON THE
"DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" IS NOT YET RESOLVED. SPEAKER KAMAL
AL-ASSAD IS STILL BOYCOTTING THE GROUP; AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT
MINISTER ADEL OSSEIRAN, WHO WAS NAMED TO REPLACE HIM AND
WHO WENT TO ONE SESSION, INTENDS AS OF NOW TO STAY AWAY
FROM FURTHER MEETINGS. THIS DEFECTION BY THE CONSERVA-
TIVE SHIITE WING IS NOT CRUCIAL, BUT IT HARMS THE REPRESENTA-
TIONAL BALANCE AMONG THE TWENTY MEMBERS.

7. COMMENT: THE PREVAILING MOOD IN BEIRUT NOW IS A
BLEND OF RELIEF THAT SECURITY HAS BEEN MORE OR LESS RE-
STORED AND ANXIETY ABOUT A PRECARIOUS FUTURE, BOTH SHORT-
TERM AND LONG-TERM. THE EFFORTS OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS
ARE A HOPEFUL SIGN, BUT NOTHING BASIC HAS BEEN ADDRESSED
YET, LET ALONE SOLVED, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT CONTENDING
FACTIONS ARE KEEPING AN ITCHY FINGER ON THE TRIGGER.
THE DEGREE AND SPEED OF PROGRESS IN THE "DIALOGUE" AFTER
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IT RESUMES OCT 9 WILL BE AN IMPORTANT INDEX.
GODLEY

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